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OR,
EVANGELICAL REPOSITORY.

DEVOTED TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE REFORMATION, AS SET
FORTH IN THE FORMULARIES OF THE WESTMINSTER
DIVINES, AND OF THE CHURCHES IN HOLLAND.

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For the Religious Monitor.

THE REDEMPTION AND SANCTIFICATION OF THE CHURCH.

[Continued from page 214.]

EPHESIANS, v. 25—27. *Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, &c.*

Obs. 5. That Christ purifies his church, and prepares her for being placed in his own immediate presence, without spot or blemish, according to an established system of means. The whole moral government of the Deity, which he exercises over his rational offspring, is a government of means. And as to that portion of his rational creatures styled the "church," our text expressly asserts "that he sanctifies and cleanses them with the washing of water by the word, that he might present them to himself holy, and without spot. Perhaps in the phrase, "to wash with water by the word," there may be an allusion to the methods taken in eastern countries to purify the bodies and cultivate the minds of the virgins that were to be presented to the royal embraces, Esth. iii. 3—9—12. Ezek. xvi. 7—14. or if there be an allusion here to the water of baptism, and the form of words then used, still it is to be remembered that baptismal washing is only an external sign, and something quite different from regeneration or saintship. But whatever be the allusion, the sense of the text evidently is this, that the word of the gospel which brings the good news of peace, pardon, atonement, justification, holiness and glory, through the cleansing virtue of the blood and spirit of Christ is the great mean which the blessed Redeemer makes use of in the purification of his church. The blood of Christ is called "a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness;"

and the influences of the Holy Spirit are very commonly in scripture set forth under the emblem of water, and both produce their effects upon the sinner through the medium and instrumentality of that divinely established system of outward means commonly denominated the word and ordinances. These outward ordinances do not, and cannot of themselves cleanse the soul and save the sinner. It is only by a participation of the inward grace, signified and conveyed through these outward means, that they become of real advantage, and "fit for the service of the living God," enabling a man with a good conscience to make a profession of his faith and repentance.

Amongst all the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth the benefits of redemption to those whom he bought with his blood, the word holds a distinguished place.—Every thing in the word, taken in its largest sense, is directed to the promotion of holiness; its precepts and threatenings, examples and promises, invitations and doctrines. The spirit of holiness which it breathes is insensibly caught by the reader, even though he may not thoroughly understand its contents.—"It is the chief, if not the sole design of the gospel revelation to give us these views and impressions of the nature of our state, of the perfections, the counsels, the laws and the government of God, which under the influence of the divine spirit are the immediate means of the purity, of the comfort and of the perfection of the saints. The whole strain of scripture shows that the chief use and excellence of the doctrines of Revelation lies in the influence they have upon the sanctification and consolation of our hearts—that these indeed are the great end of all the high discoveries of the gospel." Truth is every where spoken of as of a purifying and joyful nature and tendency. "Born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible by the word of God," I Pet. i. 23. "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth," John xvii. 17. The apostle teaches the same doctrine when he asserts that "God hath from the beginning chosen us to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth." The apostle John, after speaking of the truths of the gospel, adds, "these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full, I John i. 4. It is not then the precepts of the law, but the truths of the gospel which are the direct and immediate means of purifying and comforting the hearts of sinners. It is not the precept, for instance, "rejoice in the Lord," but it is the belief of the truth of his glorious character and undertaking, and the mighty benefits which we enjoy and hope to enjoy by him, which excites joy in our hearts. Now every one knows that wisdom consists in choosing the most proper means to accomplish the best ends. But the great end proposed by the gospel revelation is the deliverance of mankind from a state of darkness, corruption and guilt, and raising them to a state of light, purity, and favour with God: And to shew us that the purifica-

tion of the heart by the truth, is a scheme of the most perfect wisdom; the gospel is expressly styled "the wisdom of God." Herein lies the excellency and wisdom of the doctrines of the word, that they tally exactly with the present state of mankind, and are admirably adapted to cure every disease, every disorder of the human heart; to beget, to cherish, to confirm every holy and heavenly, and pious affection and disposition; to perfect us in true holiness, and to establish our souls in spiritual peace and joy. And it is a notorious fact "that the word of the truth of the gospel bringeth forth fruit from the day that men hear it in faith and love, and know the grace of God in truth." It would be a pleasing task for any one who has a just value for the doctrines of the gospel, and who takes pleasure in the contemplation of divine wisdom, to trace out the operations and effects of the truths of revelation on the hearts of those who really believe and love them; to shew how they irradiate notions, principles and corruptions which are destructive to the peace and happiness of society; and to beget and promote and establish in the hearts of the children of men that spiritual kingdom which consists in righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost.

If this scheme of purifying and solacing the hearts of men by the doctrines of the gospel, be infinitely wise, we may add, it is no less efficacious than wise. The washing of the church with water by the word, must result in rendering her a glorious church; for what the Lord hath spoken must come to pass.—"By the foolishness of preaching God saves them that believe." Indeed many of the most real and important effects of the gospel are of a silent and invisible nature, and cannot admit of such proof as is not liable to cavil. We cannot draw aside the vail which hides the invisible world, and shew the myriads who, through faith in Jesus Christ, already inherit the promises and rejoice before the throne with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Neither can the silent yet powerful efficacy of the doctrines of Christianity in turning many millions in this present state from darkness to light, from the power of sin and Satan to the service of the living God, and in proving the most divine consolation unto the hearts under the distresses of life, and in the hour of death, be demonstrated in such a manner as to silence those who are determined to gainsay it. Yet in this sacred book, "we are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses," all with one consent bearing testimony to the divine efficacy and consolation flowing from the doctrines of the cross.

But farther; the scheme of purifying the church with the washing of water by the word, and making her a glorious church, is the chief object of divine providence. "It pleased God (it pleased God highly, according to the original) by the foolishness of preaching to save those that believe." This seems to be the ultimate design of all the dispensations of providence, that scheme to which all others are subservient.

The holiness, grace, peace and eternal life of the church, are all ascribed to the knowledge of the doctrines of the gospel. It is called "the word of life," Phil. ii. 16. "Grace and peace are given through the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ the Lord," II Pet. i. 2. Through the same knowledge "we escape the pollutions of the world," II Pet. ii. 20.

As to the institutions of the gospel ministry of the sacraments and of prayer, which are all appointed for the high and holy end of edifying the body of Christ, for perfecting the saints in purity, joy and felicity, it should never be forgotten that it is only by their bringing the word of truth into practical and holy operation that they promote the end of their appointment. The water in baptism, and the bread and wine in the Lord's supper, do not operate as a charm upon the receivers. Of themselves they can no more accomplish the designs of God in their institution, than they can create themselves. These outward signs signify and represent the same truths and blessings that are set forth in the written word, and it is only in as far as the partaker of these ordinances attains to a believing, intelligent, and humble apprehension of the truths signified and represented by these ordinances, that he reaps or can reap any profit from them. But by the vivifying showers of divine influences accompanying these outward ordinances, the church, which is God's husbandry, makes sure, and often rapid progress in the divine life. In making holy and joyful through the medium of these ordinances, the Holy Spirit does nothing in the believer but what is previously required of the believer, and promised to him in the word of truth—"grow in grace." "I will be as the dew unto Israel, and he shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine." Ordinances are joyful times, if when Paul plants and Apollos waters, God giveth the increase. It is surely no disparagement to ordinances to affirm, that in themselves they possess no utility, no efficacy, but that all their virtue and benefit is of God. This one consideration attaches immense importance to them. What high and rich enjoyment should you not seek and expect in ordinances, since they are the divinely constituted medium or channel of conveying grace, and life, and holiness, and joy, to the soul.—They are truly breasts of consolation to the believing worshippers. In the Lord's supper you are particularly in the presence chamber of the great king. It is eminently a Bethel, a place of meeting between God and redeemed sinners. It is a banqueting-house, where a divine repast is set forth to satiate hungry souls, precious cordials for the fainting and weary, medicine for the sick, the oil of joy for mourners, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Well may you love the habitation of God's house, believers, the place where his honour dwells. The dew of heaven descending on the hill of Zion will make you grow up and flourish till he present you to himself, holy and perfect, even as God is holy and perfect.

Christ presented the church to his Father at his death and resurrection, and now in heaven he will do it at the last day, when he will deliver the whole number of the elect complete, in consequence of his suretyship engagements. He presents the church to himself in her individual members, when he brings them severally to himself in the day of his power, in raiment of needle work, clothing them with his righteousness, and washing them in his blood. Having once drawn you to himself with the cords of love, he will go on to purify and train you up and adorn you as a bride for her husband, till in due time he receive you up to glory, place you in his own immediate presence as one with himself, not having spot or wrinkle. How bright an idea does this give us of the grand plan of mercy whereby all the millions of which the church consists are brought to such perfect purity and glory, that when the omniscient eye of Christ the church's great and holy bridegroom shall behold it, there shall not be one spot to impair its beauty or to offend his sight. Oh what a blessed day! when the church shall be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, and the open marriage of the Lamb shall be celebrated amidst the acclamations of the heavenly host! when the whole body of the elect shall be brought forth as the bride, the Lamb's wife, to these public espousals, which shall have their consummation in complete and everlasting happiness!

INFERENCES FROM PART I.

1st. Who they are that are prepared for the services and enjoyments of God's banqueting-house? Not all those whom men call church members, but those only who belong to that holy and glorious society whom Christ hath redeemed with his blood, and sanctified by his spirit. God himself is glorious in holiness, his house is holy, and holiness becometh his house for ever. "Who then shall ascend into the hill of God, and who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.—He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O God of Jacob," Ps. xxiv. 3—6. Ask of yourselves then, if ye have been clothed with change of raiment, and made glorious within, for otherwise ye must eat and drink unworthily. A man in his natural state of pollution, guilt and misery, though seated at the Lord's table,* could neither feel nor say, "It is good to be here, this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."—"For what communion hath light with darkness, Christ with Belial," a holy God and a vile and cursed sinner? But if ye have a love to holiness, and are following after it, then are ye possessed of the distinguishing badge of true church members.

*This discourse was preached on Saturday before the dispensation of the Lord's supper.

and may hope to see the Lord at his table, and finally to see him in heaven, to your eternal and unspeakable advantage.

2d. Let those who have undergone that wonderful change wrought by the instrumentality of truth under the influence of the spirit, look back to their old state of sin. "Remember," saith Paul to the Ephesians, "that ye were once Gentiles in the flesh." "Look to the rock whence ye were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye were digged." It is good on many accounts for a believer to do so, and it is a particularly suitable and seasonable exercise before sitting down at the Lord's table. It will tend to repress boasting, to promote self annihilation, and to cause to cry out "Unclean, unclean." It will exalt the grace of God in the believer's eye, and excite thankfulness to him who hath made him to differ. It will endear and enhance the Saviour's dying love—the remembrance of so great a deliverance will animate the believer's prayers and hopes for what remains to be done for him and in him. It will also excite him to pity sinners, and to pray for their salvation.

3d. If the word of the gospel be the great mean ordained by God before all ages, to enlighten, to sanctify, and to save such as believe it; to accomplish the highest profit, glory and blessedness of his church, then we need not fear the utmost efforts of infidelity—this great scheme of providence will be carried into execution. Hence we see the reason why faith is so peremptorily required, and so much insisted on in the New Testament. The command to believe in Jesus is as kind and merciful, as it is just and reasonable. It is as much your happiness as your duty to come to Jesus Christ for all light, purity and comfort, which God communicates to mankind through him. And if you refuse to accept of the mercies of God in this way, you can have no reason to complain if you are deprived of them, and subjected to the punishment due to those who reject their own mercies.—Come then ye who are still in your state of native pollution and misery to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. "Wash ye, and make ye clean." Approach the throne of the Ancient of Days, and plead the promise—"A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. I will blot out your iniquities as a cloud, and your transgressions as a thick cloud." Oft have those who are now inheriting the promises presented their fervent supplications at the footstool of the mercy-seat, and found reason afterwards to praise the "Hearer of prayer." And surely "his hand is not shortened, nor his ear heavy." In every age he will be found of them that seek him. A free communion is opened between heaven and earth. A new and living way is consecrated by which you who are at present afar off may be immediately brought nigh unto God."

4th. Are ordinances the great channel of conveying grace and life to the soul, then pray that they may at this time be wells of salvation to you, that they may be subservient to your greater

purification and joy. Seek, that God may be known to you in the breaking of bread. Pray for a blessing on Zion's provision, that her priests may be clothed with salvation, and her saints shout aloud for joy.

I pray you, this evening exercise a holy jealousy over yourselves, lest you be deceiving yourselves. It is not enough that you are members of a christian congregation: are you members of Christ? It is not enough that your characters are fair in the eyes of fellow-worshippers: have you that holiness which is the beauty of the soul, and which makes you fair in the sight of God? If you have not holiness you are the sons of death, hated of God, prepared for the slaughter. If death finds you in this condition, the society of devils must be your lot, and hell, with all its darkness and horrors, your everlasting habitation. The hour is at hand when it will be asked, whose image and superscription ye bear. If it be then found that the image you bear is the image of Satan, and not the image of God, how fearful will your end be? Harken then to advice. Seek to be made sensible of your guilt, misery and deformity. Come to God for holiness. He it is that creates it in the heart. Come to God through Christ.—Holiness is not the way to Christ, but Christ is the way to holiness. God is the fountain of holiness, Christ the channel through which it runs to us, and the Holy Spirit the immediate worker of it upon the heart.

Press after more holiness. The church at first looks forth as the morning, but grows fair as the moon, and clear as the sun, Canticles vi. 10. The holiness of believers is at first as the morning, of a dusky hue; then grows fair, but yet full of spots as the face of the moon is, but at last clear as the sun, pure and unclouded. Plead with God to perfect his work of holiness in you. Say to him, "Preserve my soul, for I am holy," Ps. lxxxvi. 2. And thus, by the grace of God, having brought forth your fruit unto holiness, the end will be everlasting life. And I pray God to sanctify you wholly, and that your spirit, soul and body, be preserved blameless unto the day of Christ, to whom with the Father and blessed Spirit, be ascribed all praise, honour, and glory. Amen.

(Part II, in our next.)

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For the Religious Monitor.

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ON SUPERFICIAL PREACHING.

MESSRS. EDITORS,

We live in an age of improvement. Perhaps there never has existed a period in which the mysteries of nature have been explored with such a successful spirit of research, or in which the discoveries made have been so extensively applied to practical purposes. Nor is it possible for the most ardent imagination even to conjecture where the car of science will stop its bright

career. That this should, at the same time, be an age of superficial thinking, is wonderful indeed, and would appear altogether incredible, did not the occurrence of daily facts demonstrate its truth. There seems to be but one way of solving the apparent mystery, viz. this, that an all-wise Providence has raised up a few master spirits, and directed all their mental energies to those particular departments in which their light shines, for the benefit of the human race; while the great mass of the community, having no such important task assigned them, have, by a variety of concurring causes, been permitted to sink into a state of mental imbecility. There are two admissions, however, which candor requires to be made. The first is, that some degree of education is more generally diffused through the various ramifications of society, than in former times. The second is, that there is an external refinement and polish in the manners and education of the age, to which past ages have been strangers. The balance, however, is decidedly against us. Sound is but a pitiful substitute for sense, or show for substance. Weigh the scholars of the present against those of the past age, and how sadly do the former kick the beam! There is hardly a more striking difference between a substantial English yeoman and a French dancing-master, than there is between the solid scholars of the last century and the *petits maitres* of our day, learned in the surface of every thing, but really acquainted with the substance of almost nothing. It would not perhaps be difficult to enumerate the leading causes which have contributed to vitiate the public taste, and to produce and perpetuate these superficial habits.—My object at present, however, is to advert to the deplorable effects which these modes of flimsy and superficial thinking have produced in the *religion* of our day.

It requires no uncommon degree of sagacity to discover, that one of the most prominent features in the religion of the age, is its want of connection with a knowledge of Bible truth. Without adverting at all to the situation of the multitude, who make no pretensions to religion, the degree of ignorance which prevails among professed Christians is deplorable indeed. It was not more true of ancient Israel, in the days of the Prophets, than it is of God's professing people now, "my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." This is manifested by the fact, that so many aged professors are found incapable of distinguishing between truth and error, and just as ready to listen with complacency to the latter as to the former, provided that it comes recommended by the charms of oratory, or is presented in an attractive dress. How unlike the Bereans, who are commended, not only because "they received the word with all readiness," but also because they nobly and independently judged for themselves, "searching the scriptures daily whether these things were so."

If we direct our attention to the rising generation, we see additional cause to lament the spirit of ignorance that prevails.—

How many are to be found within the pale of the visible church, growing up with the enjoyment of her stated ordinances, who are unacquainted even with the *rudiments* of Christianity! They know that there is such a book as the Bible, which Christians revere. Perhaps they have, in the course of their early lives, read a part or all of it. Probably they know that it reveals a Saviour for the redemption of guilty men. But, to give even a summary of the truths which it teaches and the errors which it condemns, would be a task beyond their power. Hence, when at any time they are brought to serious reflection, they are so little acquainted with gospel principles, that they can find nothing tangible on which they can lay hold—no distinct or well defined point to which they can direct their view—no solid foundation on which they can rest their confidence. It is not my purpose at present to enquire, to what this state of things among the young is owing. Doubtless, a very large portion of it may be traced to the alarmingly prevalent neglect of parental instruction. But whatever be the causes of it, the fact indisputably is, as I have stated. What a gloomy prospect for the church! From such plants, how is the garden of the Lord to be supplied? We have one consolation, and *only* one, viz: the promise of the immutable and faithful God, that “a seed shall serve Emmanuel, and be accounted to him for a generation.” He who has promised is able also to perform. But the promise will be fulfilled, as it always has been, by stirring up his people to employ the means of his own appointment, for training their offspring to succeed them in the ranks, when they are called from the field of action.

Perhaps I may be charged with arrogance and presumption, if I advance a step farther, and point to the sacred desk as a principle and fertile source of the evil which I am deploring. Yet, conscious both of the sincerity of my intentions and the correctness of my views, I must attempt it. And I am well assured that it can be done without violating the spirit of the prohibition, “Touch not mine anointed, and do my Prophets no harm.”

Perhaps, a considerable portion of the ministers of our day would consider their performances degraded, by comparing them with those of an Owen, a Halyburton, a Guthrie, a Boston, or any of the old school; and yet it requires no uncommon degree of sagacity, to perceive how much the latter would suffer by the comparison. When we examine the sermons and dissertations of these old writers, we look in vain for harmonious sounds or well turned periods, to please the fastidious ear. But we will always find something unspeakably more valuable—something which will amply repay the labour of perusal. We will find solid and substantial food for our souls. We will find the mine of gospel truth deeply explored, and its precious treasures set before our view in their native simplicity and majesty—“unadorned” indeed, but then “adorned the most.” We will find these truths not only ably vindicated, but carried home directly to the

conscience, and applied to the practice of every class of readers and hearers. Modern dissertations in the pulpit are too often just the reverse of all this. Some pains may be taken, (that is if the preacher think study at all worth his while,) to trim the style, so that it shall flow smooth and easy. Some care may also be taken to have the arrangement neat and striking. (although with many, arrangement of any kind is considered quite too stiff and formal.) There may also be a very commendable degree of animation in the manner of the orator; (provided he does not *read* his sermon;) and in a word, every thing as to outward form, and sound, and manner, may be exceedingly graceful and attractive. But when these excellencies are enumerated, the eulogy of the performance is completely spoken. We may in vain look for that rich variety of gospel food—that critical acumen in opening up the scriptures—that enlarged and comprehensive view of divine truth in its operation on the practice—that particular and striking application to the conscience of the sinner—that multifarious store of experimental casuistry, for enlightening and comforting the child of God—which marked the pulpit labours of our venerable fathers, and which still mark those invaluable productions by which being dead they yet speak. Indeed, a modern sermon may be too frequently, without any violation of the laws of charity, be called "*vox et preterea nihil*."* The preacher takes his text, but is too fashionable very minutely to examine its structure. To lay down a doctrinal proposition from the text might indeed shew the specific mark at which he aims, but then it looks intolerably old fashioned. To divide his subject into heads and particulars might indeed aid the memories and judgments of the bulk of his hearers, but then it looks so clumsy and formal. To quote much scripture in the illustration of his subject, would indeed enrich his discourse, as well as stamp the signature of divine authority on what he says, but then it would savour too much of fanaticism, and wofully contaminate his style. To enter formally into the discussion of Bible doctrine might be both interesting and instructive to his audience, but then it would require the insupportable labour of *studying* these doctrines himself, and besides might have a tendency to make his people bigots. Dexterously shunning all these inconveniences, he at once launches forth into a declamatory harangue, in which the necessity of being religious, or in the modern phrase of "getting religion," is strongly enforced, but without ever informing his people what religion is. Perhaps the attention of the ignorant multitude may be strongly arrested, and their feelings wound up to a high degree of intensity, but the understanding remains unenlightened, and the imagination is left, without *ear* or rudder, to the mercy of every blast.

Innumerable are the evils which originate in such a mode of

* Nothing but a mere sound.

preaching. Nothing is more certain than this, that it cherishes and perpetuates a spirit of ignorance, by withholding that light of truth which alone can dispel the darkness. And in such a state of things need we wonder when we find the sentiment widely embraced, that it is a matter of comparatively little moment what people know, or what they believe, about the things of God? When people attend in the sanctuary from Sabbath to Sabbath, and hear nothing but such vague and desultory harangues, it would be passing strange indeed if they should "seek knowledge as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures."

In proportion as it cherishes ignorance it also fosters enthusiasm. The most ignorant well know that religion must consist in something; and when the mind is uninformed, what is to be expected but that the excited imagination will run wild, and form to itself a God, and a salvation, and a worship, widely different from those which the oracles of God reveal? And this is the dictate of universal experience. Wherever the truths of God have been unfaithfully or partially proclaimed, there an enthusiastic spirit has been most prevalent. We need not ask a more decided proof of the truth of this than the well known fact, that noise and extravagance have most abounded in those societies whose preachers have been ignorant and illiterate men. And this seems to furnish a very satisfactory solution of the fact, which otherwise might seem inexplicable, viz, this, that in many of the most noisy revivals of religion of which we hear in modern days, the work has been chiefly promoted by those preachers who were most visibly deficient in understanding and information.

Another evil arising from such a strain of preaching is, that it paves the way for error. The minds of men, if they think at all upon the subject, will have some notions of their own, either right or wrong; and if the truth is not seated there, the throne is left vacant for its rival. Nor will it be long unoccupied, for such are the blindness and perversity of the human mind, that "the things of God are foolishness to it, neither can it know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Were the minds of men equally poised in their inclination towards truth and error, the danger would not be so great, nor would the necessity of preaching the truth in all its integrity appear so urgent. But we know from the highest authority that the reverse of this is the case. Hence the necessity of "line upon line, and precept upon precept;" and hence the danger to which the cause of truth is exposed by such neglect.

I might add that such a mode of preaching is well calculated to produce a spirit of careless indifference. It is not to be expected that men will prize any thing very highly, of the nature and properties of which they have little or no knowledge. When, therefore, the pastor leaves his flock unacquainted with the truth as it is in Jesus, indifference to it must be the result. Nor

is this at all inconsistent with the admission already made, viz, that such preaching favours enthusiasm, which seems to be the very opposite of indifference. The excitement produced in this way has very little relation to the cause of God, but only to something which it *mistakes* for this. This seems evident from two facts, which will not be disputed. The first is, that such excitements are generally accompanied with much laxness and coldness, respecting any particular system of gospel truth. The second is, that when the excitement subsides, it commonly leaves matters in a more languid and lifeless state than that in which it found them. Whatever warmth and zeal, therefore, may for a time be excited by such preaching, we say that its native tendency is to produce a Laodicean spirit of indifference, both to truth and duty. It is therefore alike dangerous to the theory and to the practice of true religion.

What I have said above, respecting the fashionable mode of preaching, is not *universally* applicable. Blessed be God, there are exceptions, and there will be exceptions while God has a church on earth. But with regard to the great majority of preachers in our day, I believe the picture is far from being overcharged. And the evil of which I complain is, I believe, greatly on the increase. It concerns every lover of the truth to gird on his armour, and arise to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Believing as I do, that whenever the church is reformed, the reformation will commence by purifying the sons of Levi, I cannot but consider it of immense importance that the existence and extent of the evil may be known, in order that the remedy may be judiciously applied.

Were I to assign reasons why this vague and declamatory strain of preaching has obtained such a general currency among the clergy, I would enumerate the following as some of the leading causes—1st. Want of a solid theological education—2d. Superficial acquaintance with the scriptures—3d. Neglect of study—4th. Want of personal acquaintance with the state of their flocks. These, may, perhaps, be subjects of future consideration. For the present I shall conclude, calling upon your readers generally, and the ministers of the gospel particularly, to weigh the matter in the balance of the sanctuary, and to combine their efforts and their prayers that ignorance may be banished from the church, and that the light of gospel truth may shine on all her tabernacles.

PHILALETHES.



ON CHARITY.

(Concluded from page 220.)

In a former paper I endeavoured to illustrate the operation of the grace of Charity on the Christian's life, in his private walk and conversation, in his intercourse with others, and especially as it influences his conduct towards those, who are of different

sentiments and practice from himself in a public profession of religion. We have seen, that considering persons simply as Christians or as they profess to be the children of God, our judgment or opinion respecting the sincerity of such profession or the reality of grace in the heart, ought ever to be as favourable as circumstances can possibly admit, and our treatment of them should ever be corresponding to such judgment.

But again, when Charity judges concerning the *religious sentiments and practice* of those who profess, and in the judgment of Charity may be believed, to be the children of God, it judges by a different rule; and if the sentiments and practice of any deviate from this rule, in any degree, Charity as much requires to condemn and disapprove of such deviation, as to approve of and love what is right, or to love his person, seek his good and entertain the most favourable opinion possible, respecting his state.—This subject it is proposed farther to illustrate and confirm, by the testimony of God in his word, in the present communication.

It seems perfectly obvious, that in judging a person to be probably in a gracious state, the whole of his sentiments and practice are not decided upon; but may, after you have concluded the man to be a brother, with propriety be made the subject of distinct consideration. With respect to *sentiments and the practice grounded on them*, the judgments of Charity, are of a very different kind from what they were in the former case. In this case, the subject of investigation lies wholly within the sphere of our faculties; all its properties may be examined. And it may be compared in every particular with an unerring *standard* and a positive and accurate judgment formed concerning it. This *standard*, is the Old and New Testaments. All in them and nothing else, is standard. The insinuation not unfrequently to be met with, that we cannot be so certain of the *meaning* of the scriptures as to be authorised thereby to condemn or approve without limitation the sentiments of others, is one that contradicts the experience of the saints in all ages—and seems to impeach the character of Divine Revelation—to deny the promise of the Spirit to guide us into all truth—and to represent God as tyrannically requiring of those who read his word to say, what they could not with a good conscience—"Now we believe and *are sure*."

Through this glass, the glory of God's holy perfections and heavenly wisdom shines with such brilliancy, even through the medium of a translation, that the humble enquirer after truth could as soon doubt that the light of noon comes from the sun, as that the light of Divine Revelation comes from God. How can he doubt as to *that meaning* which he feels piercing into the secrets of his heart and looking with Omniscience upon the whole of the inner man? or, as to *that Word*, which says to the tumult of his soul, and the thundering voice of con-

science, peace, be still, and immediately a peace, which passes all understanding, succeeds?

The first judgment of Charity in this case is, that it is impossible that *any sentiment or practice*, in matters of Religion, can be a *matter of indifference*. *First*, Because *life* is in every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God; and consequently every sentiment contrary to this word, has in it *poison and death*. *Second*, Because "all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be *perfect, thoroughly* furnished for every good work," and because it is said "in vain do ye worship me teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." If no sentiment or practice but what is agreeable to scripture can be instrumental in promoting the glory of God, or the salvation of sinners, but on the contrary, is directly opposed to both; that principle which is indifferent either to sentiments or practice in a religious profession, may draw together a carnal multitude, and gratify a depraved taste; but it is as far from that Charity known in the scriptures, as heaven is from hell.

In judging of sentiments, Charity scrupulously guards against imputing any inference or necessary consequence, to the persons holding these sentiments, which they disavow. It may be said, that while they continue to hold such sentiments, they are in danger of adopting those that may be deduced from them; and the sentiments themselves may and ought to be charged with every fair and logical conclusion that can be grounded upon them.—This is one way of detecting their true character; but it would be as unjust as it is uncharitable, to charge persons with any sentiment which they do not hold. Another practice, not less common, and not more charitable, is to set private opinion to the account of public profession. If an individual or two, are, on some private occasion, heard giving their private views, it is very common to charge these views on the public profession of the whole body. If, indeed, these private views become generally known, and are still unnoticed, there is reason to suspect that they are not very obnoxious.

Charity has also an intimate concern in the *interpretation* of the expression of public sentiments. It puts no forced construction upon terms or expressions; it takes no strained meaning out of them. It takes up the plain and obvious sense of the words. It seeks no advantage from the slips and inaccuracies incident to the effusions of the human mind. Its object is to ascertain the mind of the writer, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. It seeks not to achieve a victory, but to emancipate the minds of fellow-men from the entanglements of prejudice.

But when every allowance which candour requires, has been made, and still sentiments appear in opposition to the word of God, it is not the nature of this holy principle to overlook them. In the bowels of tenderness it makes use of all appointed means

to convince the erring party, and persuade them to relinquish their error. In this duty it uses great plainness of speech; it keeps nothing hid; it spares no feeling and no rank, no character, age or sex, which may stand in the way of the truth. It cries aloud and tells, in all its aggravation, the sin and danger of holding the sentiments in question.

Neither will it compromise one iota of the truth, nor consent to give quarter for a moment to a single error, or countenance another in doing so, in any manner or degree. Hitherto this mode of dealing with erring brethren, has not failed to rouse against him that uses it a host of angry passions, and draw forth bitter reproaches and the most groundless accusations. He is frequently loaded with ignominious epithets. He is often obliged, in addition, to conflict with poverty. His very friends begin to be ashamed of him. He is flattered and threatened by turns; but it is all vain; Charity is inflexible and persevering, sets its face like a flint against the storm, and refuses to be ashamed.—To yield up the truth, is to betray the trust of heaven; to give place to error, is to plot against immortal souls, and prepare destruction for generations yet unborn. If they continue obstinate in their errors, there is but one alternative for Charity to take, viz, “to avoid them” and “keep no company with them, no, not so much as to eat.” However painful the measure, and apparently disadvantageous to the outward prosperity of the church, yet it is Charity to the souls of the offenders, it is an appointed means for reclaiming them. A steady, unbending testimony is still to be given against their ways. They are to be opposed to the face, and in so far as they lay themselves out for the support and propagation of their errors, it is the part of Charity “not to bid them God speed;” but the contrary. That this is the way in which it should act, will appear satisfactorily from the examples in scripture. When Israel was seized with the phrenzy of fashion, and would have a king, to be like their neighbours, the first means which Samuel tries to prevent it is, to set before them the tyrannical exactions of royalty. When this did not affect them, he tells them their sin in all the shades of its aggravation. “Ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and tribulation, and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us,” I Sam. x. 19. In the 12th chapter he recounts to them the mercies of the Lord, and compares them with their black ingratitude. “Now, therefore, stand and see this great thing which the Lord will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat harvest to-day, I will call unto the Lord and he will send thunder and rain, that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great which ye have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a king.”

Elijah was at one time the only one who dared publicly to appear on the side of truth. The king, his court, and the overwhelming majority of the nation, were opposed to it; yet was

he not intimidated from giving a most pointed testimony against their wickedness. At the very time when his enemies, fermenting with rage, were searching every corner in quest of his life, he presents himself to Ahab and tenders this sharp reproof: "I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim," I Kings, xviii. 18. John the Baptist came in the power and spirit of this same prophet, and in a time of equal, if not greater apostacy. He too stood alone in the work of defending injured truth publicly. Two very powerful parties stood in opposition to it, the Sadducees and Pharisees. They were the honourable, the wealthy, the learned, the large denominations; and he, only a poor, unlearned field preacher. "But when he saw them come to his baptism," instead of being flattered by the idea of their accession to his cause, or of cajoling into a belief that the points at issue between him and them were of minor importance, his Charity bade him say, "O generation of *vipers*, who hath warned *you* to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance; and think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father, for I say that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham. And now also the axe is laid to the root of the tree, therefore, every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire."

None ever followed this mode of dealing with offenders and the erroneous, more than the Saviour himself. His whole sermon on the mount, including the 5th, 6th and 7th chapters of Matthew, is a most pointed testimony against the sentiments and practice of the same parties. He bluntly tells his disciples, that "except their righteousness exceeded that of the Scribes and Pharisees, they should not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Among the first things he does in his own city, Nazareth, after his public ministry was commenced, he strikes at their great national error. "Many widows," says he, "were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land, but unto none of them was he sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Zidon, unto a woman that was a widow; (that is to a Gentile;) and many lepers were in the days of Eleseus the prophet, but none of them was cleansed, save Naaman the Syrian." (another Gentile.) This so enraged them that they took him to the brow of the hill to cast him down headlong. When the Samaritan woman introduced the disputed point into conversation, "our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Modern Charity would have replied, "the *place* of worship is not essential to salvation; we are all going one way, and worship the same God;" but Christ says, "ye worship ye know not what, but we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews." Were any con-

scientious worshipper now to give this reply to an advocate of unscriptural worship, he would pass for an uncharitable, proud sectarian; yet who dare deny that it flowed from Charity?

Their hypocritical show of respect to the sabbath was another prominent feature in their character, and emboldened them to cavil at his deeds of mercy on that day. This he failed not to reprove with the greatest sharpness, "thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you loose his ox or his ass on the sabbath day and lead him away to watering, and ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo! these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath? They had substituted human authority in the room of the word of God, and claimed the same respect for it. "Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the Elders; but eat bread with unwashed hands?" He answers them, "well did Esaias prophecy of you, ye hypocrites, as it is written, this people honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me, howbeit in vain do they worship me teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." On every point where they had departed from the commandments of God, he attacked them with the greatest freedom, faithfulness and particularity, and concluded with the most solemn remonstrance and fearful denunciation of judgment against them, which human language could express—"fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore behold I send unto you prophets and wise men and scribes, and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from the blood of righteous able to the blood of Zacharias whom ye slew between the porch and the altar," Mat. xxiii. 32—35. How awful to hear the meek and lowly Saviour, who came to seek and save, and whose bowels moved with compassion for wretched sinners, uttering such a reproof! Hath he indeed forgotten to be gracious? is his Charity clean gone? hath he shut up his tender mercy, in his wrath? That is impossible. Sooner can we believe that he was not holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. Every motion of his heart at that very moment was in perfect unison with that Charity which we are bound to imitate. But Charity knows no possible avenue to the hearts and souls of men, but through the truth. The determinate counsel of God is, that salvation with all its countless blessings shall come through "belief of the truth." "God hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth," and "sanctify them through thy *truth*, thy word is *truth*." Therefore he labours during the whole of his ministry, as also do all his apostles, first to bring the minds of men to a knowledge of the *truth*. While this is not effected, and men continue to deny and oppose it, the way by which the joys of salvation can

reach their hearts remains shut. "He could do no mighty works (it is said) because of their unbelief," and what were his mighty works but mighty deeds of Charity to poor, distressed, wretched men? When one said to him, "if thou canst do any thing, have mercy on us and help us." Divine Charity replies, "if thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." And therefore is the understanding first addressed, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The means by which the hearts of the two disciples going to Emmaus were kindled into a flame, was the opening of their understandings, and letting into their minds the light of truth. Very unlike the smooth prophesying of modern times, Christ says to them, "*O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory.*"

It was the purpose of God, on the day of Pentecost, to gather in a multitude of souls to a participation of his love and favour. The means employed for this end, if now proposed to modern liberals, would appear the most unsuitable and narrow minded, viz, boldly advancing that truth which of all others was the most offensive to the Jews of that day, and charging upon them as an awful crime what they deemed a service to God. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and with wicked hands have crucified and slain, whom God hath raised up—this Jesus hath God raised up whereof we all are witnesses—therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, *whom ye crucified*, both Lord and Christ," Acts ii. 22—36. On a subsequent occasion they speak after this manner: "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his son Jesus, *whom ye have delivered up, and denied him* in the presence of Pilate when he was determined to let him go, *but ye denied the holy one and the just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses,*" Chap. iii. 13—15. Dare any dispute the Charity of this manner of dealing?

The modern style employed in making proselytes appears as tame and contemptible as that of Stephen appears honourable, bold and pointed, "Ye stiff necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, as your fathers did so do ye." In a similar strain does Paul address the Jews at Antioch, Acts xiii. One cannot read attentively the epistle to the Romans without being struck with the bold and forcible manner in which he presses those great articles of christian doctrine which especially have been galling to human pride in all ages,

and on that account have been and are to this hour unfashionable; and at the end of it adds this impressive sanction, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause division and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and *avoid* them." From the beginning of the Bible to the end of it, there is no quarter given to error; and a great portion of it (both in the Old and New Testament) is cast into the form of a defence of the truth.

It will not be pretended that neither the prophets nor apostles, nor Christ himself, had enough of Charity; but some may fancy that all the points contended for by them were *essentials*; and this will be most readily granted. Every doctrine and precept which they taught and enforced was so; and *what* have we in the Bible besides?

From the above examples may we not infer, that Charity for the souls of men imperiously demands that we faithfully exhibit the contrariety of their professed sentiments (if erroneous) to the word of God; and that no consideration of ill-will or reproach, or trouble and hardships, ought to deter us from doing it; that we carefully avoid giving the least countenance or show of approbation, by our conduct, to such sentiments; that when people holding error, yield not to admonition and reproof, we are to "avoid them;" and that in so far as they have identified themselves with their errors, not "to bid them God speed," but to wish and pray that they may be frustrated? We are not authorized to say to any, "ye are of your father the devil," or in any other way to pronounce on the state of the soul. This belongs to the searcher of hearts. But we are bound to hold men in that estimation which the tenour of their conduct deserves. When we find a man habitually neglecting public worship, and finding his own pleasure, and speaking his own words on the Sabbath, we are without hesitation to esteem him a Sabbath breaker. In like manner, if we find a man, or a hundred men, habitually and publicly opposing any Bible truth or number of truths, we ought, with as little hesitation, to consider them as the *enemies* of these truths. If the above is a true account of the manner in which Charity deals with those who oppose the truth, what are we to think of that principle which says, both from the pulpit and the press, "you ought to allow that others have as good ground for believing in their creed as you have for believing in yours?" Suppose that I am "fully persuaded in my own mind (which every one ought to be) that the several articles of my creed are taught (though in other words) in scripture, and that *this is the reason* I have for believing it; if I must still admit that others may have *as good reason* for believing creeds which plainly contradict mine, there is but one step more I can take in the same course, and that is *formally* to avow it as my determination to aid apostate spirits in their present attempt to bring the visible church into that state in which she will be certain of nothing. We may now be

able to judge what credit is due to that Charity which cries continually "there is no difference," not because it seriously believes this to be true, but that you may be brought over to the popular, the great body, and thereby have your *narrow prejudices* and *little things* done away. This is that same Charity which moved Joab to take Abner by the beard and kiss him. This Charity first leads us to believe that it is of very little moment what creed we profess to believe—next, that creeds and confessions are a hinderance to the exercise of Charity and liberal sentiments—then, that we are not sure whether *any thing* professed or practised by the visible church, be right or not—and lastly, that all the discoveries which the Bible makes unto us are *but conjectures*. So that the farther a man follows this Charity he comes the nearer to scepticism or deism, under the name of Christianity.—Reader, I beseech you as you value your own soul, try this Charity which seeks the command of your affections and actions by the light of God's word, with the utmost care, for, if it is not the *Rock* that will support your house against the violence of the tempest; it is those quick sands by which the Old Serpent conceals the mouth of the bottomless pit.

Let me call to the remembrance of the reader what was formerly shown, that the Charity inculcated and exemplified in the scriptures, is the principle of spiritual life. Therefore, joy, meekness, patience, hope, and all other christian graces, are but so many different names for it, acting itself in a suitableness to the object set before it. By *it* faith performeth all its works of purifying the heart, overcoming the world and Satan; and without it faith is dead. By *it* the gospel is preached and believed, to the glory of God and the sanctification of the soul. *It* is the grand principle of the christian life, which the child of God, as it were, only renders visible when he prays, praises, communicates, and does every other external act of new obedience that is done in an acceptable manner. In a word, it is the Power of Religion. And therefore a *Revival*, properly so called, must consist in the increase of *its* power on the heart and life. A *Revival* of this principle will be marked by an increased delight in all the duties of *personal* religion first; next in family and social duties; then in those that are more public. It will appear in a just and equal regard to *all* God's institutions and commands. It seeks no *peace* which cannot be found in truth and holiness—manifests no zeal without knowledge—employs no means to glorify God or save the soul, but those which God has appointed; by such only does *it* seek to be instrumental in a revival of religion. These, however, are, neither loud and long prayers, nor impassioned speaking, nor any species of human machinery; but the plain and simple truth, enforced by such arguments as the *Word* supplies. This alone the Holy Ghost employs in changing the heart and kindling up a bright constellation of graces in the soul. It must farther appear, that the *Revival* of which we speak is the GIFT

of God. But he is sovereign both as to *time, means, manner, measure* and *subjects*. Charity, therefore, submits all these to him, and patiently waits his pleasure in the use of *appointed* means. That principle which takes in hand to determine all or any of them must be a counterfeit. God will as soon give his glory to another as countenance such presumption, or bless such means as have not the sanction of his authority. Reader, beware what you account the reviving work of the Spirit. If it be a counterfeit, however like the genuine, it is only the work of the Devil; and your rejoicing on account of it cannot be free of blame, nor your soul out of danger. A *real* outpouring of the Spirit will surely make ministers and private Christians more faithful in their respective stations—more bold, open and determined in professing and defending God's truth; and less afraid of reproach and persecution; but it will *never* prompt them to fill newspapers with an account of their great achievements in pulling down Satan's kingdom; but to wait patiently till works bear witness, if that shall ever be. "Set thy trust upon the Lord, and be doing good—wait patiently for him." G.

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For the Religious Monitor.

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THE PROPITIATION OF CHRIST.

[Continued from page 223.]

In a former paper we noticed that the propitiation of Christ supposes that God, as the moral governor of the world, and sinners, are actuated with mutual enmity against one another. It also supposes, that God, as a gracious father and sovereign, pitied a certain portion of mankind sinners, and determined to save them with an everlasting salvation. He is the just God and the Saviour. In farther illustration of the propitiation of Christ we now observe—

3dly. That in order that his justice, as the lawgiver and governor of the world, might be maintained, and that his love, as our gracious sovereign and father, might find an honourable egress to its objects, God sent his Son to be the propitiation for their sins. The elect (as we saw) were sinners in common with the rest of mankind, and their sins were just as offensive to God as the sins of the reprobate. Although he loved them, their sins prevented this love from imparting blessings to them until the demands of the violated law were satisfied. That these demands might be satisfied, and grace reign through righteousness, God appointed Christ to be a sacrifice for their sins; and by this sacrifice he made the propitiation. It averted God's judicial displeasure from the elect, and opened up for them access to his favour and acceptance. It was both expiatory and propitiatory. It cancelled their guilt, the sole cause of God's displeasure.

sure against them, and prepared the way for the grace, mercy and love of his heart terminating on them, and enriching them with the fulness of blessing. To understand this in its true light and bearings, consider these two things: 1. How God and sinners stand affected towards one another, independent of the atonement. This is fully exhibited in the feelings and actings of God towards fallen angels, and in their feelings and actings towards him. They are in operative hostility. He is suspending all gracious communications of his favour from them, and visiting on them the terrible effects of his penal anger. They are totally alienated from him, and filled with implacable hatred against him. The commencement of the same feelings and actings is now manifest between God and sinners, and hastening on to their full maturity in hell. Even in this world, whatever love God may cherish in his heart for any of the children of men, he maintains no friendly intercourse with any of them, not only till the atonement is made, but till they have actually received it.— 2. Consider how God and saints stand affected to one another. They not only love one another, but also maintain the most friendly intercourse. God is reconciled to them, and they are reconciled to God. This implies that they were once enemies, that the quarrel is terminated, and they are now become friends. This change is produced by the atonement.

This reconciliation between God and men is mutual. God is reconciled to them and they are reconciled to God. We are fully aware that the Bible never asserts that God is reconciled to us, and that it affirms that he always loved the elect. Some, from this, imagine that reconciliation takes place only on the part of the elect. This opinion, however, is the result of haste, and of ignorance of the language of scripture. In the nature of things, the offended, and not the offending party, can be reconciled; and yet the Bible would seem to attribute reconciliation to the offending. Mat. v. 23—24—"If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." "Be reconciled to thy brother;" offer thy offended brother such satisfaction as will pacify him. In the same sense, the Philistines use the word when they expressed their fears that David would reconcile himself to his master Saul by their heads. In like manner, when God is said to reconcile us to himself, this implies that he is offended, and becomes pacified towards us by the propitiation of Christ. Hence he is said to be pacified towards us, which denotes the same thing as his reconciliation, and implies his displeasure and its removal.

It would, however, be a most grievous error, to suppose that the propitiation of Christ is in any respect, the cause of God's love and grace to sinners. These are essential attributes of God, and he was, utterly independent of the death of Christ, from all

eternity, to exercise them in our salvation. So far is Christ's mediation, obedience and death, from being the cause of God's love to us, that they are all the effect of it. It was because God loved us, that he sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. This propitiation did not render God gracious, it only averted his just displeasure against us and opened a channel for his grace and love to flow to us. And to perceive how this was effected by Christ, the following considerations must be adverted to, and they will more fully illustrate the nature, reality, and excellency of this propitiation.

1. Our Lord Jesus Christ, with his own voluntary consent was substituted in the room of his people. Every victim offered in sacrifice to propitiate offended Deity, was regarded as a substitute in the room of the offerer. This idea of substitution, pervades all sacrifices in all ages and all lands, whether presented by the direction and command of God or the result of ignorance and fear. And that Christ was substituted in the room of his people, is the constant and express doctrine of scripture. To quote particular passages asserting this, is superfluous. It is plainly implied in his suretyship. This was for us, and secured his obeying the law and enduring its penalty as our substitute to deliver us from condemnation and to obtain for us a title to eternal life: And this substitution was not constrained, but voluntary. As the Son and Mighty God, none could have compelled him to stoop so low as to assume our place. But when in animal sacrifices and offerings God could have no pleasure, for their own sake, actuated with love divine, Christ said, "Lo! I come, I delight to do thy will, O my God."

2. The guilt of all his people for whom Christ made the atonement, was transferred to him as their substitute. The guilt of the offerer was regarded as really transferred to the victim, as the victim was actually substituted in his stead. This was most significantly done, in the sacrifice on the day of the annual atonement. All the sins of all Israel were put that day upon the sacrifice, and this was denoted by the priest's putting his hand on its head and confessing over it all the iniquities of the whole congregation. Lev. xvi. 21. What was done then in figure was done in reality in the sacrifice of Christ. Isa. liii. 6.—"The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." 2 Cor. v. 21.—"For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin."

3. Christ in his sufferings exhausted the whole punishment denounced by the law against all the sins of his people, in whose room he substituted himself, and which were by imputation transferred to him. Death, in the judgment of God, is the wages of sin. Nothing less than this is proportioned to its desert, or can be an adequate expression of his displeasure against it.—This was the award of the law, and this Christ underwent. The dissolution of the soul and body, constituting natural, death he underwent, and spiritual death also, as threatened by the law and

inflicted by God, he endured. It contained the two following dreadful ingredients, and he fully exhausted both.

1. A full manifestation to his soul of the wrath of God against sin, and the infliction of it on him. This he experienced partially through life, and more dreadfully in the garden and on the cross. Then he not only saw what sin deserved, and how much God was displeased on account of it, but through this perception Jehovah poured into his holy soul the full vials of his burning wrath. The sword of Justice, wielded by the arm of Omnipotence, penetrated his vitals, till his heart was melted within him, and his soul was agonized, amazed, and exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.

2. There was also a total suspension of all sensible manifestations to him of God's favour. While God upheld his human nature in dying, according to the arrangements of the covenant, and loved him as his dear son and righteous servant—as judge, and viewing him as our substitute, charged with the guilt of all our sins, he covered his face with a frown, and experienced a total eclipse of his favour. This made the holy Jesus exclaim, “my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.” And this dereliction must have been felt by him with a pungent keenness, proportioned to the value his affectionate heart set on his father's favour, which was better to him than life.

Combine, then, this painful sense of the wrath of God, which Christ endured, and this suspension of the divine favour, which he experienced, and say, was not this the essence of the death denounced in the penalty of the law, and when Christ endured it, did not the pains of hell take hold upon him? Is not this painful sense of divine wrath, and this loss of divine favour, the very essence of the punishment of hell? And if this was not the very penalty of the law, what would Christ have endured more, supposing he had endured it?

And that Christ, in making the atonement did not merely suffer, but that his sufferings were penal as well as vicarious, is manifest. For the scriptures, in describing them, employ the same terms and phrases which they use when they describe sufferings unquestionably penal. To bear iniquity, confessedly means to undergo punishment; and the Holy Ghost affirms that Christ bare the sins of many, and bore our sins in his own body. To be made a curse, certainly means to endure the curse incurred by sin; and Christ was made a curse. In conformity to this, Paul tells us “that sin was condemned in the flesh of Christ, and that he was made a curse to deliver us from the curse of the law.”

Some may imagine that because there was a manifest difference between the sufferings of Christ and of sinners, especially of the damned in hell, that his sufferings differed from theirs, both in kind and degree. Circumstantial differences we allow there were between them; but still we maintain that he suffered

the real and full amount of the penalty of the law. Take away from the sufferings even of the damned in hell all that arises from their depravity, and inability to exhaust their punishment, such as despair, hatred of God, and perpetual duration, and it would then be found that his sufferings and theirs would be the same in kind and degree.

That there was, in the penal sufferings of Christ in the room of his people, a deviation from God's usual procedure in the infliction of punishment, is readily admitted. Still, as a measure fully compatible with the strictest justice, and which admirably secures the ends of punishment, it is not only justifiable, but infinitely worthy of the wisdom and grace of its author. As it respects the Lawgiver, the supreme end of punishment is the display of his rectitude and holiness; and this was certainly eminently gained by the death of Christ. His propitiation is a declaration of God's righteousness. The inferior ends of punishment, as respects society, are, the deterring of others from transgression and the protection of the righteous, and both are secured by his vicarious death. It is, moreover, a measure which, while it injures none, admirably displays and promotes the glory of the Godhead and the happiness of all holy intelligences.—Add to these considerations, that Christ is united by covenant to those for whom he suffered, constituted one with them in law reckoning, and a partaker of their very natures, their brother, their kinsman redeemer—and its propriety becomes altogether obvious.

4. This full endurance of the punishment of the sin of the elect, by Christ their substitute, satisfied every claim of justice, and thus averted from them the wrath of God, and prepared the way for their restoration to his favour. Hence his death is called a propitiation, and his sacrifice is declared to be to God a sweet smelling savour. And if a propitiation was possible, it must have been the result of the sacrifice of Christ—every conceivable requisite in a propitiatory sacrifice, in the highest possible perfection, combined in it. It was appointed by God himself, and intrinsically of sufficient worth to take away sin. The Levitical sacrifices possessed the former of these requisites, but were entirely destitute of the latter. It was impossible that they could take away sin; but there was no impossibility of the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, accomplishing this. His death, we have just seen, embraced and exhausted the whole penalty of the law; and when this was endured, the ground of controversy and wrath, on God's part, was removed, and reconciliation necessarily ensued. His death was obediential. He had a commandment from his father, authorizing and enjoining him to lay down his life as a sacrifice for sin. The life which he laid down was his own by assumption, and he dedicated it to God. Father, for their sakes I sanctify myself. His sacrifice was voluntary and official. No man took his life from him; and acting as the divine-

ly appointed high priest of the church, he himself offered it up unto God: And with it he offered the grateful, the ennobling incense of all the graces of the Spirit, in their very best exercise. The promises of the covenant he embraced and rested on, even in the hour and power of darkness—"my God, why hast thou forsaken me." Love supreme, zeal for the divine glory, and the most intense affection for his people, filled and actuated his whole soul, when Jehovah poured out upon him the full vials of his wrath—the just reward of imputed guilt. A sense of the Majesty of Jehovah, and of the abominable nature of sin, filled his heart with the most profound humility and pungent sorrow. He bowed with the most perfect resignation to every expression of the divine will in his suffering—"Thou art holy"—"Thy will be done." And from the depth of his sufferings, in the exercise of lively hope, his eye fixed on the joy set before him, he confidently expected it, even when enduring the shame and the pain of the cross. These, and similar graces, were symbolized by the meat offerings and incense accompanying the ancient sacrifices, and rendered his death not only a sacrifice, but also "an offering of a sweet smelling savour to God."

In enumerating the considerations which constituted the satisfactory nature of the sacrifice of Christ, in computing its moral worth and efficacy, one consideration remains which must not be overlooked. This is the dignity of the sacrifice, which Christ, the officiating priest, offered on an altar, sanctifying the gift.—Christ, at once the victim, priest and altar, although he had two natures, the human and divine, had but one person. The agency of both these natures in him was the agency of a divine person. The sacrifice which he offered, though but his human nature, was *Himself*, and derived infinite and ennobling value from his divine character. When he died, the Lord of glory died, and God purchased the church with his own blood. The altar on which the sacrifice of his human nature was offered, and which sanctified it, was his Godhead. "Through the Eternal Spirit he offered himself." The officiating priest was Immanuel, God with us. Now, if sin be an infinite evil, as committed against an infinite God, here is a sacrifice of infinite value for its expiation, and for suitably demonstrating God's abhorrence of it. It was not the ignominy and severity of the sufferings of Christ, however deep and great, which constituted them a propitiation for sin, but their appointment by God, the exercise of the graces of the Spirit in enduring them, and the infinite value which they derived from the dignity of his divine person. "God purchased the church with his own blood."

The satisfactory nature of the death of Christ, as a propitiation, is amply and divinely attested. In the progress of the atonement to perfection, God the Father once and again, with a voice from heaven, announced his approbation of Christ and of his work: And when his sacrifice was offered, and the atone-

ment made, this testimony to its perfection was continued and extended. God raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, which implies his approbation of his work, as the fulfilment of the condition of the covenant. He appears in heaven as our intercessor, and a priest upon his throne with his own blood, which is a demonstration that sin is expiated. He received the gift of the Spirit—shed him down on the church, that church continues—Christ sees his seed, the pleasure of the Lord, prospers in his hand, and all his worshippers are the living witnesses that he has made the propitiation.

[*To be concluded in our next.*]

Selections.

ON THE DOCTRINE OF PURCHASE.

(*Concluded from page 231.*)

6. Christ purchased, not divine ordinances, but only the saving effect of these on the chosen.

In the preceding versés, the apostle distinguishes “the inheritance,” which, so far as blessings are intended, is the purchased possession, from “the word of truth, the gospel of salvation,” the means bestowed on the Ephesians, prior to their interest in the purchase. The Bible, and all sacred institutions, whether of the ancient or present economy, can be viewed only in the light of means, which suppose indeed the purchase of redemption, just as they suppose the decree of election, but which merely belong to the arrangements of wisdom. That they would not have existed, had there been no such thing as the purchase, is readily granted, because then there had been no occasion for them, and God does nothing in vain. But that they cannot, consistently with holiness and justice, be bestowed on any who are not interested in Christ’s satisfaction, is disproved by their very design, as well as by the fact that many enjoy them who eventually perish in their sins. They are not, it should ever be remembered, means of the same order with the second causes employed in the natural world, where the effect invariably follows the cause, unless a miracle prevent it. From their very complexion and design, they must be general, common to saints and sinners, to the elect and the reprobate. While they are capable of being misimproved, abused, and profaned, instead of producing a happy effect, they become to many “a savour of death unto death.” Neither the existence of divine ordinances, therefore, nor their bestowment on one nation rather than another, neither the favourable opportunities nor the natural capacity for enjoying them, are the fruits of the purchase. These fruits, as we have already established, are only such things as could not be conferred on sinners, consistently with law and justice, without satisfaction,

and such as of course are infallibly secured by Christ's obedience to the death. Of this description clearly is the *saving effect* of divine institutions; and thus we choose to express it, lest by saying loosely the *salutary effect*, we should seem to include the beneficial influence of the gospel in civilizing the world, or ameliorating the state of human society; for many may in these, if not in other respects, have "tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come," who yet fall away, or never obtain the salvation of their souls. But is the gospel, and all its sacred institutions, "the savour of life unto life?" This was what justice forbade, this is what the death of Christ has secured.—In this respect "the heavenly things are sanctified" by the all-comprehensive sacrifice; and as all things are said to be ours, so "Paul, Apollos, and Cephas," ministers of the gospel, the doctrines they promulgate, the ordinances in which they officiate.

7. Christ purchased, not common benefits, but spiritual blessings, including the sanctified use of all temporal mercies.

This is with many a very delicate point, yet we hope it will appear, that just conceptions of the purchase tend neither to dishonour it, nor to bereave the Christian of any valuable privilege. Without reverting to the principle laid down in our preliminary statement, (which, however, the reader would do well to review, pages 257, 258,) we might naturally expect that the discussion of the preceding articles has paved the way for treating on this part of the subject without offence, and even to the conviction of the most scrupulous for the honour of Jesus. If, as we have seen, we may not magnify his purchase by ascribing even every thing spiritual to it, if we cannot in consistency with truth say, that he purchased the love of God, the new covenant, the promises, the Spirit, miraculous gifts, or stated ordinances; and if it be no disparagement to his death to deny that these things, so sacred, so truly divine, are its fruits; can it be essential to its honour to say, that he purchased things merely temporal, the common benefits of life? Or why should his death be thought to be greatly disparaged by the negation of this? Nay, one might expect that every hearer of the gospel would regard it as the high commendation of the death of Christ, to hold, that its fruits are all like itself supernatural, that is, of a higher order than any thing produced by or founded in nature.

But lest this should be said to be only analogical reasoning, which, though it may tend to conviction, cannot be sustained as decisive, let us survey the opposite tenet in the various forms in which it has been proposed. Some, for the purpose of reconciling the idea of universal redemption, with the undeniable doctrine of scripture, concerning the necessity and importance of Christ's death, have held, "that even the remains of the law of nature on the hearts of the heathen, are the fruits of the purchase; and that therefore, should the heathen be saved by these

relics, their salvation would still be imputable to Christ." This notion, though it may be disavowed by many who plead for the purchase of temporal means, might be easily traced as a native consequence to certain forms in which the opinion has been stated. Those, for example, who carry it to its utmost extent, allege, "that the very existence of world posterior to the fall, with the production of the human race in their several generations, and consequently all that they possess, must be ascribed to Christ's mediation." Here the relics of the law of nature, and the exercise of reason, are plainly included, as well as the common mercies of life. The opinion, moreover, decidedly extends the benefit of Christ's mediation to the inferior creatures. If but for his purchase temporal means would not have existed, both wicked men and the beasts of the earth share largely in its fruits. It is said, in order to avoid this conclusion, "that what the inferior creatures enjoy, is only the accidental result, since the benefit of the mediation was wholly intended for man, and ought to be contemplated only in relation to him?" Still the opinion is liable to great and serious objections. Instead of speaking loosely of Christ's mediation, which seems in fact to mean his interposition from eternity, the friends of the doctrine ought boldly and directly to refer to his purchase; but this they are aware would greatly fetter their reasoning. The scriptures always distinguish between the patience of God and the purchase of Christ. In 2 Pet. iii. 15. "the long suffering of God" is said to be "salvation," because it is subservient to salvation, affords an opportunity for being saved, gives time and space for repentance. It is the *salvation*, however, present and final deliverance from wrath, that results from the death of Christ, or is the subject of purchase, not the *long-suffering* which is merely a suspension of judgment, and under which the very elect continue to be "children of wrath even as others." We obtain through Christ "the remission of sins," which are said to be "past through the forbearance of God," Rom. iii. 25. But if temporal mercies could not be conferred upon fallen men consistently with justice, which must be the case if they be all the fruit of Christ's purchase, then no place is left for divine forbearance. It must be impossible, a thing which at least has no existence, and the very name ought not to have occurred in the scriptures; for who sees not that forbearance ever implies a certain degree of comparative good, and of course the communication of those things in which it consists, their rightful communication by God, and their lawful possession by man, who ought thus to be led to repentance? Again, if the existence of the world, the production of all human generations, and the necessarily implied communication of temporal mercies, must be traced to Christ's mediation, then the *public character* of Adam as the representative of all his posterity, whether he stood or fell, is either made void or suspended on the interposition of the Sa-

viour; from which last idea the revolting conclusion would follow, that but for said interposition, the millions who perish would never have existed. The light in which this subject should be viewed, is best ascertained, however, by turning our thoughts to the decree of *election*, which, so far from being the fruit of Christ's purchase, is in the order of things confessedly prior to his very undertaking. In that decree, God evidently regarded mankind as existing in all their generations, and existing not only as creatures, but as sinful creatures, and consequently objects of forbearance, with all that it implies or includes, as to the enjoyment of temporal mercies. Some, indeed, in order to discard the doctrine of election, charge it with saying that God decreed to make some men only to damn them, as if the decree had respected their creation. This charge will not be easily got rid of by those who ascribe the existence of mankind, and temporal favours, to Christ's interposition. But it has clearly no application to the doctrine of scripture. The very term "*election*," supposes the objects in being, or viewed as existing; and the nature of the decree supposes them already existent in God's foreknowledge, as fallen creatures, a corrupted mass. Independently, therefore, of Christ's mediatory character, and prior to his very interposition, a state of forbearance is admitted, with such communication of temporal benefits as must of necessity belong to it.*

Supposing this point conceded, still it is alleged, "that whatever be the ground on which wicked men enjoy their existence and the benefits of life, these are all the fruit of Christ's purchase to believers." If by this be meant that the death of Christ is the cause of their receiving them even as the gifts of providence, and that they only, of all men, have a valid right to them; this, with the notion that dominion is founded in grace, is at once

* To prove that the existence of the world, the production of all human generations, and the enjoyment of common mercies, must be owing to Christ's interposition, an appeal is sometimes made to Psal. lxxv. 3 "The earth and all the inhabitants thereof is dissolved. I bear up the pillars of it." The reader will observe, however, that "the inhabitants" of the world are mentioned as already existing, not to be produced; and by reviewing the whole psalm, he will be satisfied, that besides its direct reference to David's government, or the natural duties of civil rulers in any country, it ultimately refers, not to Christ's interposition from eternity, but to the nature and effect of his administration in the New Testament age. It clearly coincides with Psalm lxxxii. which the reader would do well to consult for explanation. The effect of the same administration is declared Psal. xxxvii. where we are repeatedly assured "the righteous shall inherit the earth," when the wicked are cut off. Instead of teaching us that temporal dominion or benefits are purchased by Christ, the promise simply ascertains the universal influence of the gospel in the latter days, with the desirable result of the judgments inflicted on the enemies of his kingdom. It is just in amount the promise made to Abraham, an illustration of the covenant which constitutes him spiritually "the heir of the world," by securing that in his seed "all families of the earth should be blessed." See Isa. liv. 3. Psal. lxxii. 7, 8, 11, 13, 16, 17. Similar passages will readily occur.

subversive of all natural rights, interferes with the arrangements of providence, is destructive of order, and of the moral duties we owe to wicked men as members of society.. If nothing more be meant than that the death of Christ is the cause of something peculiar, which constitutes a real distinction between the portion of believers in temporal good, and that of the wicked, this form of stating the distinction will be readily admitted. But let us examine the distinction. It will be found to be both unscriptural and unintelligible, unless we result to something altogether *spiritual* as the true characteristic of the believer's portion, and rest in this as the only fruit of the purchase.

1. It must strike the mind with some force, that no where in scripture is the purchase of Christ represented as a ground on which we may expect the enjoyment of temporal good. No such carnal motive to embrace the gospel is ever held out. Our Lord, on the contrary, forewarns his followers of trials and persecutions. And when expressly solacing them on the head of provision for the body, he does not say, "Take no thought, I have purchased for you all these things, or am about to procure them by my death," but simply, "My heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things;" and then he refers them to God's common care of the works of his hands, exhorting them to trust in the merciful orderings of providence. In John vi. and other passages, where he treats of his death and its proper effect, it is to eternal life he constantly refers, and to spiritual provision, in distinction from "the meat that perisheth," whether manna, or bread miraculously produced, or ordinary food. 2. Since temporal mercies are promised conditionally, that is, so long and in such measure and manner as shall be most for the glory of God and our good, that which is absolutely secured by the promise, is only the due regulation of them for gracious purposes, the enjoyment of God in them, and the sanctified use of them.—These advantages, therefore, which are evidently spiritual, and not the things themselves which are presupposed, are the fruits of the purchase; for whatever Christ purchased, he established an absolute claim to it, pleadable in law and justice. The proper subject of faith to the saint is, that while, as a human being and descendant of Adam, he had a destined lot in the world; that lot shall now, through the mediation of Christ, be ordered wholly, and in the best manner, for his spiritual welfare. 3. "The purchased possession," so far as blessings are meant, is what the apostle, in the verse on which these observations are founded, and in verse 11th, styles "the inheritance," and this he all along speaks of, as comprising the whole of the believer's portion.—How then does he describe it? as an inheritance chiefly reserved in heaven "till the day of redemption;" which surely cannot be affirmed of temporal benefits, but only of that enjoyment of God in them, and by other means, which shall be perfected in glory.—Next, as an inheritance of which the Spirit is "the earnest."—

Now, an earnest is a part of the good intended, as well as the pledge of final possession. But the Spirit is clearly of a different order from common benefits. The inheritance of which he by his fruits is the earnest, cannot consist in these, but in the favour of God, and the proofs of his love, whatever be the means. But is not the inheritance explicitly and perfectly defined, ver. 3. ? "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with *all spiritual blessings in heavenly places.*" This is the purchased possession. Not temporal mercies in an earthly Canaan, or terrestrial paradise, but "*spiritual blessings,*" those particularly on which the apostle afterwards expatiates,—redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins, adoption, and sanctification, rendering us holy and without blame, according to the purpose of election. These are the great comprehensive privileges which, by removing wrath, and imparting the true enjoyment of God, convert not only divine ordinances, but even our domestic residence, and all the scenes of our temporal lot, into "*heavenly places,*" till their consummation is attained in the highest heaven, the region of eternal felicity. Blessed with these privileges, the common benefits of life are all sanctified to genuine believers. God manifests himself to them in another way than to the men of the world. Nay, 4. "All things are yours,"—not only Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, inspired men, with all their diversified gifts, ministers of the gospel, and divine ordinances,—not only "*life*" with all its mercies,—but "*death*" with all its antecedent trials and afflictions, 1 Cor. iii. 21. 22. Who will stand forth to say that these things, particularly adversities, dereliction, temptations, persecutions, and death, were purchased by Christ? Yet these are through him declared to be ours. On the same ground and in the same sense in which life and its mercies are ours. This single passage might be sufficient to give any candid inquirer a just idea of the subject.—Why should our thoughts be restricted to mercies? Why dwell so much on the common benefits of life? The inheritance is far more extensive. It embraces every occurrence. But then it is altogether spiritual. It just lies in spiritual blessings, affecting primarily our state and our nature; but, in consequence of this affecting the whole of our present condition, whether prosperous or adverse, ensuring safety in death, and a happy eternity. It is in its grand amount the favour and friendship of God, which the wicked enjoy not in their greatest abundance. The blessing of the Lord maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow. Distinct, then, from either the mercies or the trials of life, what Christ hath purchased is incapable, like them, of being a vehicle of wrath; it cannot perish with the using; it cannot cease or be withdrawn.

Besides the appeal to scripture, the difference, we have said, between the manner in which common mercies are enjoyed by the righteous and by the wicked, is really unintelligible, unless we resort to these spiritual views. "As it said, "that temporal

mercies come to believers through the channel of the new covenant." So, we reply, do trials, afflictions, and death, which are not on that account said to be purchased by Christ. The phrase admits of no other explanation but that which we have given.—All things come to believers with the favour of God, and are therefore sanctified to their use, or made subservient to their spiritual welfare. Is it farther alleged, "that mercies were the things which were forfeited, while afflictions and death were incurred by the fall." How, we would ask, were they forfeited? Was it as things which God cannot, in consistency with justice, confer upon any but holy beings? Then, indeed, they would be the proper subjects of purchase. But this we see from fact is not the case. It was only as proofs of the divine favour they were forfeited, or as real blessings, means of enjoying God, and attaining the end of our being. Did not the forfeiting expressly consist in incurring the wrath of God, becoming subject to his curse? But the curse, so far from inferring annihilation, supposes existence, which abstractly considered, is certainly a benefit something better than non-existence; and the curse, as it is perfectly compatible with this, so with all the benefits on which life is dependent, for these, as truly as existence, it can convert into sources of misery, or employ as the mediums of its own execution. The restoration, therefore, consists not in securing the benefits, but in removing the wrath which must otherwise have continued to affect them and in thus rendering them subservient to the grand end of their being, according to the original design. Is it alleged, in a word, "that the dominion lost by the fall is restored to us in Christ, and therefore all temporal favours must be the fruits of his meritorious mediation?" On this last refuge we would say, 1. That as the natural image of God in the spirituality, intelligence, and immortality of the soul, was not lost by the fall, much of the dominion attached to it, or necessarily resulting from the majesty and skill of man, has been allowed to remain. This is all that is requisite for wicked men in a state of forbearance; it is all that they enjoy, and it did not need to be regained. But, 2. The power lost in connection with the moral image of God, was that empire over the creatures, which insured their subserviency to the best interests of man. This is the empire regained by Christ for his people, but now in a spiritual form, including the power of universal controul. "All things are put under him;" not only beasts of the field, irrational creatures, but angels and men, friends and foes; not only benefits, but sources of danger, temptations, and afflictions; not only the energies of grace, but the terrors and the legions of hell; all kingdoms and all forms of government, civil, ecclesiastical, and divine. Such universal dominion was rendered necessary by the present circumstances of his people, in order that the design of his tasting death might be verified in them, Heb. ii. 9. And this dominion was, in the arrangements of heaven, assigned to him as

the honourary reward of his work. But the fruit of his purchase is only *the spiritual advantage* which infallibly accrues to believers from the power with which he is invested. Nothing shall be a minister of vengeance to them; every thing shall work for their good. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord; their empire in Christ, the lost dominion restored, is perhaps the only practicable, certainly the most available form under the present constitution of things. Still the privilege is spiritual.—It terminates in this, “All things are yours.” And than this, as we have already explained it, what would we have more? It assuredly comprehends all our salvation, and all our desire.

8. Christ purchased, not resurrection and immortality, but a glorious resurrection, and blessed immortality.

The tenet now condemned, belongs to certain writers of the Socinian class, of whom some hold that the wicked will be annihilated, and only the virtuous raised; others, that all mankind would have been annihilated in death, had not God conceded to Christ what is styled the hope of the world,—immortality for the soul, and a resurrection for the body. We know from scripture, however, that the soul is originally immortal, not by necessity of nature, for in this sense God “only hath immortality,” but by divine constitution. The resurrection of the body is also ascertained to be requisite on principles of justice, independent of Christ’s mediation. Neither the one nor the other, any more than common benefits, may prove to be a favour. All depends on the state of the person. The wicked, we are assured, go to their own place at death, and all who die in their sins shall come forth to the resurrection of damnation. What Christ hath procured is, the transition of the soul into paradise, and the resurrection of the just,—that resurrection in which they are assimilated to him, the first fruits. It is this, and not the resurrection of all men, the apostle describes 1 Cor. xv. It was to this (*Εξανστασις*;) and not resurrection abstractly, he aspired, Phil. iii. 10, 11—21. When thus the children of the resurrection, their bodies being fashioned like to Christ’s glorious body, the grand effect of his obedience to the death will then be realised to the saints, in all the eternal glories and felicities of the heavenly world.

The purchased possession ought next to have been contemplated in its reference to *persons*. These are redeemed to God.—Not to enlarge on this department, the only two observations to be made shall be briefly stated.

9. Christ purchased, not angels, but only human beings.

Verily he took not on him the nature of angels. Of these spirits the *holy* had no need to be redeemed; the *fallen*, again, are reserved without hope to the judgment of the great day, and hell is expressly characterized as the place appointed for the devil and his angels.

10. Christ purchased, not the whole human race, but only the chosen.

We have sometimes heard of salvation by what are styled the uncovenanted mercies of God. That they who use this strange and unwarranted language, mean salvation exclusive of all reference to the purchase of Christ, we will not venture to assert. It is probable "they know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm." By some the phrase is used merely to serve the purposes of a party-spirit, without altogether damning those of a different communion from themselves.* Another opinion more avowedly hostile to the doctrine of purchase is, that all the wicked, including even those who have not obeyed the gospel, shall, after a certain period of suffering in hell, be released and exalted to the kingdom of glory. This is to say, that their sufferings will be more efficacious than those of Christ, will expiate even the guilt of finally rejecting him, nay, the sin against the Holy Ghost, though the scriptures have declared that it hath no forgiveness in this world, or in the world to come. Are we told, their sufferings will at length induce them to acknowledge the Saviour? Then future misery turns out to be merely corrective; and is there no difference, we would ask, between judgment and correction, perdition and chastisement? Or must hell and the curse of God be referred to the covenant of grace, as in fact means of salvation? On pretence of aggrandizing the death of Jesus, various schemes of universal redemption have been devised. They may all be reduced to the two most frequently proposed,—that in some sense he died for all men, though many shall eventually perish,—or that all men shall by virtue of it be actually saved. If by his dying in some sense for all men be meant, that he procured the existence of the world, or the production of human generations, or common mercies, or immortality for the soul, or resurrection for the body,—we have already disproved the idea. If something more spiritual be meant, that all men were really redeemed to God, though such as wilfully reject this salvation make void their privilege, and must consequently perish,—the notion is inconsistent with the doctrine of scripture concerning the infallible efficacy of our Saviour's death. All the passages adduced in its favour are, by the context or by internal evidence, ascertained to refer, either to the *general relation* of his death to persons of every nation, or to its *sufficiency* as a ground of encouragement to sinners of every description. But as he intercedes, so he died intentionally, not for the world, but for those whom God hath given him out of the world. On the other opinion, that all men will be actually saved, whether at the last

* In a late publication, dissenters from what is arrogantly styled "the Church" (of England to-wit) are placed on a level with the heathen. Both, it is alleged, may be saved, and through Christ it should seem; not in the regular way, however, but only by the uncovenanted mercies of God. In some bye-path, as it were, they may probably get to heaven!

day, or after ages of suffering, we only appeal to the accounts which are given us of the doom of the wicked, Matt. xxv. 41—46.—2 Thess. i. 7—9. The day of the redemption of the purchased possession, is also "the day of the perdition of ungodly men," 2 Pet. iii. 7. This is decisive; for if any doubt should remain as to the true idea of *perdition*, it is fully ascertained by our Saviour. In his view, "the son of perdition" is "the man for whom it had been good had he never been born," John xvii. 12.—Matt. xxvi. 2—4. But it would surely be good to have been born, if even after ages of suffering eternal happiness were to be enjoyed.

N. B. E.

Religious Intelligence.

SUCCESS OF MISSIONS.

We last week presented our readers with the statements of an English Missionary respecting Christianity in the Island of Ceylon. Some of our readers may think it unnecessary to insert farther proof, than is exhibited in the accounts of missionaries, from month to month, to show that they are not labouring in vain. We heartily wish no such necessity did exist. But when we find respectable publications asserting that nothing has been accomplished by all the labour and expense of the friends of missions, we feel it due to the cause of truth, to show the fallacy of these assertions by an appeal to facts. One scarcely knows which most to wonder at—the boldness of such an assertion, or the ignorance which prompts it. Excepting one or two small specks of earth, in the ocean, where, it is triumphantly asked, have our missionaries made any lasting impression? If any are in doubt on this subject, and feel a real anxiety to learn, we would recommend them to look into the *Missionary Gazetteer*;—and they may find it is not strictly true, that "after the lapse of many years and the expense of an immense treasure, *nothing has been effected.*"

The following extract from an address, by Rev. Mr. Edwards, of Andover, bears on the same subject.

[Conn. Obs.]

We are permitted to witness success—and success so glorious that it has already been celebrated with ecstasy of joy, by every being in the universe that has heard of it, and rejoices over him that repenteth.

It is but a few years, since the present system of missionary efforts began. Many who are now present can remember the first missionary meeting—the first monthly concert—and the first contribution, in the present system of efforts, to send the gospel to the heathen.

Now you may witness on the first Monday of every month members of thousands of churches, in countries which extend half round the globe, assembled at the throne of mercy, having agreed together touching the thing that they should ask, and uniting in supplication that it may be done for them. And he who hath said, "Ask, and it shall be given," is manifesting his faithfulness.

Even now, almost at the very commencement of their askings, and attending it with correspondent efforts, you may witness, set

up in heathen countries, more than 40 printing presses—all manned, and in vigorous operation, furnishing Bibles, school books, religious tracts, and various other productions for the literary, moral, and religious improvement of the heathen world.

You may see more than 250 missionary stations; at most of which are regularly organized Christian churches, containing, in the whole, many thousands of hopeful converts from the darkness of pagan idolatry.

On distant shores, where 40 years ago, the name of Jesus was not known, I can show you, every Sabbath, numerous congregations, averaging more than 1000 souls each, all bowing before Jehovah, and rendering united thanks for his “unspeakable gift.”

As you pass through their villages, at the rising of the sun, you may witness numbers returning from the forests and groves, who have been out to pray to their Father who seeth in secret. And you can often find scarce ten families in a village, who do not unite daily, in family devotion.

In that small portion of the world, you may count not less than 14,000 persons who can, in their own tongue, read the Bible; and more than 7,000 who can, with the pen, transact the ordinary business of life.

You may go to their Sabbath school, and there, at an annual meeting, witness thousands of children. And as they sing “Hosanna to the Son of David,” you may see the tear drop down the cheek of a hundred parents, as their hearts swell with emotions too big for utterance in view of what the gospel has done for their children.

And as you hear the deep groan break through the assembly, ask, What is the matter? And with streaming eyes, one will tell you, “O if the missionaries had only come here a little sooner, I too should have had children to attend the Sabbath school, but before they came, when Satan reigned, and we were all in darkness, I killed them.”

You may see parents around the communion table, melting in contrition at the dying love of Jesus; and parents too who have with their own hands, before they had the gospel, killed two, three, and, in some cases, four of their own children. Now, were they living, most joyfully would they lead them to Him who took little children in his arms and blessed them, and said, “Of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

You may go, in that country, to a missionary meeting, and find collected together, 7,000 people, bearing their offerings to the Lord of Hosts.

You may see the fond parent move with rapid step, at the birth of his infant to enrol his name, as a member of the Missionary Society.

“You—he says, as he looks on his offspring, with feeling which no parent born in Christendom ever knew—“if it had not

been for the gospel, might have now been killed. And as the gospel saves you, it is no more than right, that you should do something that it may save others." And very careful is he to pay the child's missionary tax every year, until the child is old enough to earn, and pay it himself.

In short, sir, there is throughout that country a moral renovation.

The wilderness and solitary places are glad; the desert rejoices, and blossoms as the rose. The eyes of the blind are opened, and the ears of the deaf are unstopped; the lame man leaps as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sings. An highway is there "the way of holiness;" and the ransomed of the Lord are already returning, and coming home to Zion with singing. Joy and gladness are found among them; while sorrow and sighing flee away.

Is not here encouragement to go forward, to persevere with increasing diligence to the end? And is there not encouragement enough to persuade every individual to do this?

If not, I can show you 3,000 pupils in missionary schools among our North American Indians; 3,000 in the Sandwich Islands; and 12,000 in islands farther south. I can show you 3,000 in West Africa, and 4,000 in South Africa; 50,000 in the East Indies, and not a small number in the West Indies. Among them are thousands of females, of whom Paganism has said, and repeated the lie a thousand times, that for them to learn to read is impossible; because they have no souls. Now they are by thousands in missionary schools; and making as rapid improvements, considering their condition, as any individual on the globe.

Here, then, are thousands of persons who are to be mothers, and tens of thousands who are to be fathers, in a course of Christian instruction; 450 ministers of the gospel, more than 50 of whom were born in Pagan lands, now proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ; 250 missionary stations, at most of which are Christian churches; and tens of thousands, who have renounced their idolatry, and acknowledged Jehovah as the only living and true God.

And what has been done? what sacrifices have been made, by the inhabitants of Christendom, to produce this mighty change? Have farmers generally given their farms, and merchants their merchandise, to replenish the treasury of the Lord? No. Have men generally given their income, above the needful expenses of their families? No. Have they given half, or even one-tenth part? No. What have they done? If all that has been done to send the gospel to the heathen, should be averaged upon the individuals in Christendom, it would amount to about one-half cent in a year.

GERMANY.

Letter from the Rev. Dr. Van Ess, to Benjamin Digby, Esq. Dublin.

DEAR FRIEND,

I feel it incumbent upon me, to give you an account of the manner in which your last donation of £20 has been expended. The annexed little book, under the title 'St. Chrysostom, upon the Use and Blessing of reading the Bible,' has been printed by that donation in 3,000 copies; it is now spreading with God's blessing among the Catholics, and operating as a most salutary antidote to the Pope's recent prohibitions of reading the Bible. The book contains merely extracts from the works of St. Chrysostom, upon the use and edification to be derived from reading the scriptures; and this saint being ranked among the Fathers of the Church, his opinions constitute a part of the traditional doctrines of the Catholic church, against which nobody is allowed to make exceptions. The propagation of such writings, for the promotion of reading the Bible, is now the more necessary, as the Roman court and its hirelings, do every thing in their power to render the Bible Societies suspected, and to prevent the reading of the Bible by the laity in general. This giant of darkness is now raising his head with all his might, against the diffusing light of the gospel; but the King of glory knows how to defend his church and his book with merciful love, lest the wiles and artifices of man should destroy what he will have preserved. And God be thanked, I am in this respect rich in the most joyful experience, that the more the word of God and the book of books is prohibited, the more general and stronger is the desire excited for it among the Catholic laity, and the more this divine seed is disseminated, the keener is the hunger for the bread of life. In the other book annexed I show, that it is the will and command of the Catholic church that the priests give and explain the scriptures to all. I have given a public account of the state of the funds now in my hands, from which it results, that from 1st May 1822, to the end of September 1824, I have distributed 54,708 New Testaments, and 1542 Bibles, the total sum of all the New Testaments diffused by me, amounting to 523,129, and that of the Bibles 11,984. Our Lord has not yet closed the large gate for further propagation, and he continually assigns me more labourers in the vineyard of the Lord, who indefatigably with me, lend a hand to the great work of God.

As there is also, according to public papers, a great stir in Ireland, both for and against the propagation of the scriptures, it might be perhaps of great advantage to get my two little books translated into English in Ireland, and printed, as especially in one of these writings, the Bulls of the Pope have been confuted, in which he is inveighing against the Bible Societies, and reading the Bible. Should you wish me to take care of having these two books, or one of them translated into English, the sheet printed might cost about £1. One of the above mentioned publications, 'Ye Priests,' &c. is read with eagerness. I had 5000 copies, all of which are nearly gone, and the demand for it is still so great, that 10,000 more might be printed. It is therefore my most urgent desire, that you would most kindly assist me with another donation, in order to enable me to get a new edition printed, the diffusion of which must be attended with the best success wished for among the Catholics, and at the same time be a powerful bulwark against the Roman prohibitions. I take the liberty of enclosing an account from the newspapers, the object of which is to render the Bible Societies in Ireland suspected. Be so kind as to let me have some information as to the truth or untruth of the statement, and thus make me to refute in German papers, and to defend the cause. It is surprising how much the enemy dares and devises to injure the good cause of the scriptures, and to render the Bible Societies suspected. But indeed Rome is fully aware, that the Bible Societies are her most formidable enemies, in spreading against her system, the truths of God instead of man, and will after all succeed in overthrowing Babylon. Please to present my Christian love to your committee. I hope these lines will meet you in good health; as to my own, it is pretty well. Remem-

ber me in your prayers to God, and be assured of my Christian love and great respect, with which I am,

Your friend and brother,

L. VAN ESS.

TO THE RAINBOW.

By Thomas Campbell, Esq.

Triumphant arch that fill'st the sky
When storms prepare to part,
I ask not proud philosophy
To teach me what thou art—

Still seem as to my childhood's sight,
A midway station given;
For happy spirits to alight
Betwixt the earth and heaven.

Not all that opticks teach, unfold
Thy form to please me so,
As when I dream'd of gems and gold
Hid in thy radiant bow.

When science from creation's face
Enchantments' veil withdraws,
What lovely visions yield their place
To cold material laws!

And yet, fair bow, no fabling dreams,
But words of the MOST HIGH,
Have told why first thy robe of beams
Was woven in the sky.

When o'er the green undeluged earth
Heaven's covenant thou didst shine,
How came the world's gray fathers forth
To watch thy sacred sign!

And when its yellow lustre smiled,
O'er mountains yet untrod,
Each mother held aloft her child
To bless the bow of God.

Methinks thy jubilee to keep,
The first made anthem rang
On earth, delivered from the deep,
And the first poet sang.

Nor ever shall the muse's eye
Unraptured greet thy beam;
Theme of primeval prophecy,
Be still the poet's theme!

How glorious is thy girdle cast
O'er mountain, tower, and town,
Or mirror'd in the ocean vast,
A thousand fathoms down!

As fresh in yon horizon dark,
As young thy beauties seem,
As when the eagle from the ark
First sported in thy beam.

For faithful to its sacred page,
Heaven still rebuilds thy span,
Nor lets thy type grow pale with age,
That first spoke peace to man.

